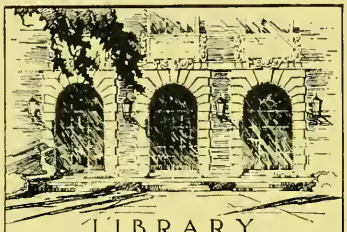

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A CHARGE

TO

THE CLERGY OF THE DIOCESE

OF

ST. DAVID'S,

BY

CONNOP, LORD BISHOP OF ST. DAVID'S,

DELIVERED

AT HIS PRIMARY VISITATION,

OCTOBER, 1842.

PUBLISHED AT THE REQUEST OF THE CLERGY.

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LONDON:

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1842.

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TO

THE CLERGY

OF THE

DIOCESE OF ST. DAVID'S,

THIS CHARGE,

PUBLISHED AT THEIR REQUEST,

IS RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED,

BY THEIR

AFFECTIONATE FRIEND & BROTHER,

C. ST. DAVID'S.

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A CHARGE,

&c.

My Reverend Brethren,

If the object of our present meeting were to interchange assurances of mutual respect and good-will, or to transact any ordinary business connected with the duties of our calling, I might have thought it requisite to explain why I suffered the earliest opportunity of holding it to pass by. But when I reflect, that I am now addressing you for the first time on this occasion, and consider the various important topics on which you may expect to hear my opinion and advice, I feel persuaded that you will not deem any apology needful for the delay, or be surprised that I was desirous of gathering fuller information on the state of the Diocese, than I could have brought to our conference, if it had taken place last year. The circuit which I then made, for a different purpose, was not, I trust, unprofitable with regard to this. Indeed, I am conscious that my knowledge of the condition of the Diocese is still imperfect, and consequently that I may be led to some erroneous conclusions on points which depend mainly on the results of experience and observation :

though I trust that these mistakes will not be of serious moment, and that they will give occasion to their own correction. There would, no doubt, have been sufficient ground for such an apprehension in any other new and large field of pastoral superintendence. But there are—as we are all aware—circumstances peculiar to this Diocese, or common to it with only a few beside, which claim especial attention, both on account of their great importance, and because it is more particularly with regard to them that there is most room for difference of opinion, and the greatest difficulty in forming a just estimate of their character, and a satisfactory decision as to the best mode of dealing with them. It may however be an advantage to us, that these circumstances will be apt to strike one to whom they are new, more forcibly than those to whom they have been long familiar, while there is, I trust, no danger lest the impression of novelty should be attended with any bias to distort the judgement.

The occasion on which we are assembled, while it invites us to consider the present state of that portion of our Church which is the scene of our labours, naturally leads us to take a glance at the past, which contains the germs and causes of all that we have immediately before our eyes: as it is only by the light which the past and the present reflect on each other that we can hope to form a probable surmise as to the future. There is indeed much in this retrospect, as well as in the survey of what we now

behold, to excite deep regret; scarcely anything that can yield unmixed satisfaction: but it would be unmanly and unwise to shrink from it on that account. It may be for that very reason the more instructive: and it is absolutely necessary that we should learn to contemplate it steadily and calmly, if we would not deceive ourselves as to our real position, our true interests, and our right course.

You will not suppose that it is my intention to enter into a historical inquiry which would open many disputed questions; I wish simply to direct your attention to a few notorious facts. The foremost among them is this: that, within a century past, a large part of the population of this Diocese has been alienated from our communion, and is still in a state of separation from it. It would, I repeat, be foolish and dastardly to turn our eyes away from this fact, or to treat it as a secret which it is possible to conceal, or dangerous to divulge. It is highly desirable that we should look it in the face, and examine it in all its bearings. Various speculations have been formed to account for this result, which it would be foreign to our present business to notice. I would only remark, that whatever opinion we may adopt on this subject, we shall be in the greatest danger of falling into error, and of losing almost all the benefit to be derived from the lessons of history, if we either attempt to refer the fact to any single cause, or to explain it so as to shift all blame from the Church herself—considered

in her successive members—on those who have abandoned her. Let it be our endeavour to bring an open mind, and an impartial spirit, to the consideration of the fact, which we cannot but view with deep concern. But let us be more especially on our guard against those prejudices into which we may be most easily betrayed, not only by our personal or professional interests, but even by our best and purest feelings. Let us not shrink from acknowledging, that the state of things which we deplore has arisen in a great measure out of neglect and abuses which we must not attempt to disguise or palliate, and may be properly regarded as a penalty which the Church has to pay for the selfishness, the supineness, and worldly spirit, with which her affairs were conducted, and her duties discharged, by those to whom they were entrusted. Let us not refuse to go still farther than this, and to make a confession which may appear to some of us much more humiliating. Let us not scruple to own, that much good has been done by those who are opposed to us: that the change which has been effected, within the period we are reviewing, in the moral and religious condition of the population, has been in many respects salutary; and that it has been produced by those very efforts from which the interests of our Church have so deeply suffered. This is an admission which we ought to make, so far as truth requires it, not only without reluctance, but with joy and thankfulness, though we must be humbled by the reflection, that this could not have been the

case, had not the Church been in some great degree unfaithful to her trust. And let us not desire to throw all the blame on those who have gone before us, and to claim an entire freedom from like transgressions and omissions for ourselves.

But on the other hand, let us not, in a spirit of false liberality, aggravate those features of the case which we might naturally most wish to soften, nor dwell exclusively on those facts which are most painful to our feelings, as Churchmen. Let us remember that the lukewarmness and inertness, the recklessness and worldly-mindedness, with which in the early part of the last century the resources of the Church were so often misapplied, and her duties neglected—that this character was not at that time confined to this, or to any part of the body, but prevailed throughout the whole; and not only so, but that if we look abroad beyond our own communion, we shall find that during the same period no other was in a more flourishing state: that almost all were languishing under similar or more grievous disorders. And while we trace the consequences of these common faults and errors, let us not overlook the peculiar causes of weakness, the difficulties and disadvantages under which this portion of our Church has laboured, and with which it has still to struggle; the inadequate maintenance which it affords to so many of her ministers, which prevents them from devoting each his whole time and attention to one parish; the deficiency in church-room, which excludes so large a part of the population from her

public worship, and compels them to seek religious instruction elsewhere; the condition of so many of her sacred edifices, some sinking into irreparable decay, many more in such a state as to repel any one who was not willing to make a sacrifice of personal comfort, if not of health, to devotion: to all which must be added, in many districts, the necessity of providing for the spiritual wants of a population divided by a difference of language, which prevents the two sections from joining in one religious service. And there is another feature in the case, which ought not to pass unnoticed, both for the sake of justice to the Church, and because it may suggest some useful lessons. It is evident that the progress of Dissent has not been in proportion to the growth of any of the evils, the faults and abuses, to which its origin is commonly referred. On the contrary, it might seem as if it had been stimulated by the reviving zeal and energy which have been displayed in the Church; and which, if they had been called forth earlier and more generally, would probably have been sufficient to counteract it. We cannot help concluding that the breach has been widened by the operation of motives and principles foreign to those of its authors. The leaders who reluctantly seceded, and drew others away from the Church, because they could not find within her pale a sufficient supply for their spiritual wants, but never ceased to regard themselves as members of her communion, were followed by others, who have made it their main object to render the

separation as complete, formal, and lasting as possible, and have exhibited, and propagated, a spirit of decided hostility toward her. We cannot but look upon this as a proof, that the work which was begun in many cases with pure intentions, though perhaps with a great want of moderation and prudence, has been since directed and forwarded by an agency in which we may reasonably suspect a strong admixture of human passions. For we find traces of this hostile spirit as well where the difference of doctrine is apparently slightest, as where it includes points of the greatest moment. The fact presents an instructive illustration of the universal tendency of schism, to which we may well apply what the wise man says generally of *strife,* that its *beginning is as when one letteth out water.* And it holds out a warning, which will not be slighted by those who value the unity of the Church, against every arbitrary, wilful infringement of any rules or observances calculated to secure it. We see, and feel, how much easier it is to break down than to restore, to sever than to reunite, to scatter than to gather again: how much easier to perceive occasional inconveniences, which may under particular circumstances be produced by a wholesome restraint, than to foresee the disastrous consequences which may result from a breach of the law, or disregard of the authority which imposes it. We learn how essential patience, caution, and humility are to the exercise of charity, and that it is only by them the reality can be distinguished from its counterfeit.

It would have been a much more pleasing part of my duty, if it had been in my power to congratulate you on a favourable change in the state of things we have been considering, or to direct your attention to any clear indication of the approach of better times for this portion of the Church. I do not say that such indications are not here and there perceptible; but they are neither so uniform, nor so numerous, as to make it safe to dwell upon them as grounds of confidence: though we may very properly derive encouragement, as well as instruction, from any cases, however few or obscure, in which success has attended efforts which we are able to imitate. But, independent of such partial advantages, there are some general sources of consolation, and grounds of hope, which it will be both cheering and profitable to keep in view. I would remind you, that even those among you who are placed in circumstances where the actual difficulties of the Church are greatest, and her prospects appear most gloomy, may derive comfort from an assurance like that with which the Prophet animated his desponding servant: nor will it require any extraordinary revelation to satisfy them that they need not fear, however lonely and perilous their position may seem; for in many senses we may say, with regard to our adversaries, that *they which be with us are more than they which be with them.* This is true, not only with respect to such associates and auxiliaries as are only to be discerned by the eye of faith, in past ages and distant spheres, but with respect to the present state

of the Church, if we will only enlarge our view, to comprehend it as a whole, and do not let any local obstacles obstruct our survey, and if we widen our sympathy to embrace all who are partakers with us in the same doctrine and fellowship. We shall then undoubtedly find, in the fortunes of the entire body, ample matter for joy and hope, numberless signs of growing strength, of prosperous activity, of a spirit tending at the same time to consolidate her foundations, to supply her defects, and to enlarge her borders; and so, both within and without, to assert her true character, and to vindicate her claims to the affection and reverence of her children. While we consider what has been effected and is going on elsewhere, we might easily forget the less agreable objects presented to our view in our immediate neighbourhood; but it would not be right to do so: much rather ought we to dwell upon the contrast, and let it stimulate and encourage us to redoubled exertions.

It is also consoling to reflect, and this reflection is suggested and confirmed by that which we have just made, that the losses which the Church has sustained among us, have not arisen from any inherent, irremediable defect in her system, from any unsoundness in her principles, or weakness in her constitution, or from any cause which ought to abate the attachment of her friends. It may be a question, whether they are chargeable in a greater degree on the faults and errors of her members and ministers, or on outward

events which it was still less in her power to prevent or control: but on either supposition we may trust that they will be repaired, in proportion as her means are enlarged, the obstacles which have checked her expansion removed, and her capacities more fully brought out into action. And happily this is no mere possibility or devout aspiration, but a prospect which we have actually before us, and which only requires time to become a present reality. Among the outward conditions most indispensably necessary for the accomplishment of her objects, the two which stand foremost, are undoubtedly a ministry, and places of worship, in sufficient number, and convenient situations, for supplying the wants of the people. I need scarcely observe, that there is at present a very great deficiency in both respects in this diocese. Few parishes possess the advantage of a resident minister, who is able to devote his time exclusively to one In the great majority of cases, the poverty of the endowment has rendered it necessary to commit two parishes to the care of the same person, to whom they commonly afford a barely adequate maintenance. It follows, of course, that either on the morning or evening one of the churches remains closed every Sunday, and those who are unwilling to neglect public worship must seek it elsewhere. Yet even this is perhaps a slighter evil than that which arises where the extent of a parish prevents a portion of its inhabitants, sometimes the largest portion, though well inclined, from resorting to the Church for Divine Service at all We

cannot wonder that districts should be lost to the Church, we can scarcely regret that they should be occupied by her adversaries, where, but for a few occasional visits of the minister, who must be almost a stranger, seldom seen, and still more rarely sent for, there is nothing to remind the people of her existence. A third case, of very frequent occurrence, is that in which the difference of language in one parish renders it impossible for all members of the Church to join in her worship at the same time; and consequently either one part must be wholly neglected, or both imperfectly provided for. I have intimated that there is room to hope that these wants will be gradually supplied. It must indeed, as every one is aware who knows the extent of the deficiency, be a work of time: but still it is consoling and encouraging to have a prospect of improvement before us, however slow, if steady and certain. And such we have in the aid which we may look for in more quarters than one. We naturally turn our thoughts in the first place, toward the fund placed at the disposal of the Ecclesiastical Commission: and perhaps there is no part of the kingdom where the appropriation of ecclesiastical property to the purposes of that fund might seem to be more urgently demanded by the interests of the Church, than this diocese. But the benefit which it is entitled to expect from the measure will not be immediately in proportion to the amount of its contributions to the common fund. The resolutions of the Commissioners, which give a just prefe-

rence to the claims of the largest destitute masses of population, will operate to postpone those of a diocese in which the population is spread over a large surface. In the meanwhile, however, those districts out of which the revenues composing the funds issue, will experience such aid as their circumstances may require. But the relief of our most pressing want, that of ministers and places of worship in parts now almost destitute, must still depend on private liberality, and the assistance of the excellent societies which have been instituted for these purposes. And we have ground to hope, that they will continue to call forth the pious munificence of the opulent friends of the Church ; that their funds will be increased in proportion to the growing demands made upon them; and that the spirit in which they were founded, and have been supported elsewhere, will spread among the affluent members of the Church in this Diocese.

Much as we must regret that legislative enactments should have been necessary to enforce, wherever it is practicable, the residence of the clergy among their flocks, we cannot but rejoice at the prospect, that the abuses which gave occasion to those enactments will, at no distant time, have disappeared. Some interposition of the Legislature would perhaps be still more desirable to put an end to the uncertainty which at present prevails as to the legal means of enforcing the obligation imposed by the law, of keeping churches in repair. A measure which, without a sacrifice of existing rights, should remove

the occasions of discord afforded by the present state of the law on this subject, would be one of the greatest benefits the Church could receive from the Legislature. I pass lightly over these topics, and I am far from wishing to exaggerate the importance of the relief and assistance which may be expected from any of these channels. I do not think it would be at all desirable, that we should conceal from ourselves, that it is either precarious in its nature, or will be narrowly limited in amount, and is possibly reserved for a distant period. If it is fit that we should not overlook any part of our brighter prospects, that we should note all those signs which prove that the resources of the Church are not exhausted, and that we are not labouring without means, or against hope, it is still more important that we should never forget that, under the Divine blessing, it is on the spirit that prevails in the Church itself that all our hopes must ultimately depend. Whatever contributions may be made to the work, are chiefly valuable as indications of the interest taken in it; and they will be only useful, in proportion as they shall be applied in a like spirit of devotedness and self-denial. Without the willing and zealous co-operation of the laity, the exertions of the clergy, however strenuous, can never be attended with more than a very scanty measure of ambiguous success. It was under a deep conviction of this truth, that, at the meeting of Rural Deans held this summer, I proposed to revive, with such modifications as the change of circumstances

appeared to require, the Diocesan Association instituted by Bishop Burgess, under the name of "The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge and Church Union, in the Diocese of St. David's," which having accomplished one of its most important objects, in the establishment of the College at Lampeter, had for several years ceased to exercise any of its functions, and might be considered as extinct. The unanimity with which the proposal to revive it, under the name of *The Church Union Society*, was adopted by the meeting, encourages me to hope that the measure will be attended with happy results. As the Resolutions then agreed to, which describe the objects of the revived Association, will soon be placed in your hands, I need not occupy your time on this occasion with a more explicit statement of those objects. I trust that the more generally they become known, the more they will engage the sympathy and aid of the friends of the Church thoughout the Diocese. For the present I will only express my earnest hope, that you will both yourselves support the Association to the utmost of your ability, and endeavour to obtain the co-operation of the laity in your respective neighbourhoods. But we must remember, that such a co-operation on the part of the laity will always be regulated by the degree of zeal and energy displayed by the clergy, by the sense which they appear to entertain of the importance of their own duties, and the faithfulness with which they discharge them. This, which is true at all times, is most emphatically

true at the present juncture. The interests of the Church entrusted to her ministers at a critical period, are of more than ordinary magnitude. More may be sacrificed by neglect or imprudence, more may be won, both for this and future generations, by vigilance and activity, than in times of less promise and less danger, when it is sufficient to hand down the deposit unimpaired. On us, in our measure, it depends, whether the Church shall realize her brighter prospects, and be able to profit by the succour she may receive. But as such opportunities, when neglected, are not to be expected soon to return, unless we leave her in a better condition than we found her in, it is certain that we shall leave her in one much worse, and less hopeful, and that we shall be answerable for the loss and damage her cause will have sustained. And therefore, it is to myself a source of the greatest satisfaction to believe, that there prevails among the clergy of this Diocese a degree of zeal and activity, not inferior to that which is to be found in any other, or in any past period; and certainly in no other is it put to the test by greater difficulties and discouragements. The more praiseworthy and valuable it is on this account, the more desirable is it that it should be employed to the utmost advantage, and that it should be so enlightened and regulated by right principles and maxims, as not unconsciously to take a direction in which it would defeat its own objects. I am inclined to think that in both these respects there is room for suggestions and warnings, some of which may be now peculiarly seasonable.

There is, I am persuaded, no one among us, who does not feel that there is need, not only of all that each can do by himself in behalf of the Church, but of concert and co-operation among those who are labouring in the same cause; no one who thinks so highly of himself, as not to believe that he may learn much, and derive much assistance from communication with his brethren, nor so engrossed with his own share of the common work, as not to be desirous of imparting to others whatever has been recommended by his own experience to himself. We are throwing away the most important of our privileges, if we never, or rarely and but for very few purposes, avail ourselves of our communion with one another: if each remains almost entirely a stranger to the manner in which his brethren discharge their duties, without the means of profiting by their knowledge and experience, and without an opportunity of rendering any like service to them. It is not enough that we are members of one great body, unless we feel ourselves to be so, and realize the unity which we profess by mutual sympathy and succour. One of the advantages resulting from such conferences as the present, consists in the strengthening of this consciousness of fellowship, and in the opportunity it affords of interchanging information and opinions. But these occasions occur far too rarely to answer the desired end, and in this Diocese archidiaconal meetings do not fill up the void. The place of the Archdeacon is for many purposes supplied by the Rural

Dean, the revival of whose office was a great benefit conferred on this Diocese, and, in the way of an example which has been extensively followed, on the Church at large. But, useful and indispensable as it has proved, it cannot be said that it has hitherto been brought out in its full efficiency here, as it has in other Dioceses where it was revived at a much later period. One of the objects which it answers, is to convey information to the Bishop. Even this will be more fully accomplished, when the visitations of the Rural Deans shall be performed more regularly, and a report of every thing worthy of remark be periodically transmitted to the Bishop; and this I have the pleasure to know, from the assurances I received at the general meeting of the Rural Deans held this summer, will henceforward be carried into effect. But another important branch of their office is, to serve as centres of union for the clergy of the Deaneries: and this has either never been attempted, or has generally failed. I am convinced that great benefit would be likely to arise from meetings of the Clergy, held periodically in each Deanery under the presidency of the Rural Dean, for the purpose of communication on all subjects connected with the general and local interests of the Church. In these conferences doubts might be removed, and information and advice interchanged, on whatever points either of doctrine or practice, might occur in the course of your parochial ministrations. And with these meetings there might be advantageously con-

nected the formation of libraries and reading societies, which might supply the want of theological works, and particularly of the more important in modern literature, which is often so painfully felt by clergymen in retired situations with limited incomes. It would not be unreasonable to expect, among other fruits of such an institution, that it might contribute a number of useful additions to the popular works designed for the instruction of the poor. It is only through the press that a great part of our population is accessible to any teaching but what they receive from Separatists. Plain, pithy, pointed, and lucid statements, exhibiting the real doctrines of the Church on disputed points, and removing the many popular prejudices and errors which prevail both as to the nature and the grounds of her distinguishing tenets, with as little as possible of polemical discussion, in language and style adapted to the most numerous class of readers, might be of incalculable service. But it is peculiarly desirable that works of this description should be previously subjected to the revision of a competent board, to prevent the harm which would result to the cause from imperfect or exaggerated statements, or unsound arguments, into which the advocate of truth may often be unconsciously betrayed. There is undoubtedly at present a scarcity of such publications, especially in the native language of the great mass of the people, which might be supplied by translations from approved English works of the kind I have adverted to: and even

though they should not be now on the list of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, I think there is ground to hope, that the Society might be induced, either to enlarge its list, or to relax its rules, for the sake of furthering an object so strictly in accordance with its own.

I am aware that what I have here recommended is nothing new. But is to be regretted that for some years past, meetings such as I have described have been generally superseded by others of a very different description. The accounts which I have received lead me to believe that the clerical meetings, which are now very frequently held throughout the Diocese, have little more in common with such conferences than the name: that they are merely occasions on which a number of clergymen attend Divine Service, and the greater part of the time is occupied with public discourses addressed to the congregation. It does not appear, that a private conference of the assembled clergy is any regular or usual part of the proceedings. The causes which gave rise to this innovation are not obscure; the motives were, and are, I have no doubt, most praiseworthy; the effect, it may be hoped, on the whole, salutary; but still I must be allowed to express my regret, that in any instance the meetings of the clergy should have assumed this form. Where this is the case, it appears to me that the higher and far more important object has been sacrificed to one comparatively of little value. No doubt the ultimate end which those who attend such meetings should

propose to themselves, is the edification of their flocks. But the people is in fact deprived of the chief benefits which it might derive from the consultations of its pastors, if the only result is the delivery of a few public discourses: while the opportunity is lost for such an interchange of experience and observation, as would assist each in the performance of his ordinary ministerial duties. I do not mean that it may not be very desirable to make use of such occasions for the instruction of the people by means of addresses from the pulpit: especially if the subjects selected be of such a nature as to convey seasonable information, not usually found in parochial sermons. But it must be considered that the benefit produced in this way is at best of a very limited and fugitive kind, and not unmixt with very serious danger, both to the people and the ministers. There is danger to the congregation, lest they should mistake the gratification of an indolent curiosity for spiritual edification, and should be led to form an extravagant estimate of the value of one part of the service: and there is danger to the ministers, lest they should be drawn into display and competition with their brethren; which can hardly fail to be sometimes the case, when more than one discourse is delivered during the same service. Even where this most pernicious effect is not produced, it will be scarcely possible, in meetings so conducted, to avoid the appearance of it, which will make an impression on the hearers very unfavourable to their spiritual edification, and not at all

calculated to heighten their respect for the Church or her ministers. I have observed that it is not difficult to account for the origin of this practice; but I must own, that it does not appear to me to be recommended by this consideration. It belongs to a system which is not that of the Church, and which it is neither honourable nor prudent to imitate. It was a state of things so far similar to our own, as to hold out what may still be in some respects a useful warning to ourselves, that drew the following observations from one of our old Divines:—"As to sermons, I hope they do not undertake to be as eminent a part of the worship of God among us as prayer. If they do, I must the less blame the poor ignorant people, that, when they have heard a sermon or two, think that they have served God for all that day or week; nor the generality of those seduced ones, who place so great a part of piety in hearing, and think so much the more comfortably of themselves from the number of the hours spent in that exercise, which hath of late been the only business of the Church (which was by God entitled the House of Prayer) and the Liturgy at most used but as music to entertain the auditors, till the actors be attired, and the seats be full, and it be time for the scene to enter."*

But the remark which I made as to the origin of

* Hammond: *View of the New Directory. Works,* Vol. I. p. 167, (ed. 1674.) Compare Hooker, E. P. V. 81. (Vol. II. p. 524, ed. Keble.) Some excellent remarks on this subject may be found in Mr. Evans's *Bishopric of Souls,* p. 102: a work which cannot be too strongly recommended to every clergyman's study.

this practice admits of a more general application, and seems to me so important, that I am desirous of drawing your attention expressly to it, and of illustrating it by some other examples. Let me premise, that I can enter very fully into the feelings which may induce a Minister, anxious for the welfare of his people, and the prosperity of the Church, but surrounded by Separatists, whom he sees continually increasing their numbers, to resort to extraordinary expedients for the purpose of retaining or recovering a congregation. It is neither strange nor blamable, that he should be willing to try all allowable means of attracting hearers, and, if the mass of the people should be deeply imbued with sectarian prejudices, that he should be inclined to every degree of accommodation to their tastes and opinions, not manifestly inconsistent with his character and engagements as a Minister of the Church. But let me remind you that, laudable as is the motive which prompts such attempts at conciliation, they may be carried too far, so as to injure the cause which they are designed to promote. The Church cannot be permanently a gainer—she must ultimately lose—by an addition to her professed members, purchased at the expence of her principles, or of her legitimate authority. In such cases those whom she seems to have won, do not in fact belong to her : they are strangers at heart, and always ready, when the temporary attraction is withdrawn, to abandon her communion again. Thus, where a prejudice—I fear not an uncommon one—

prevails against the use of a Liturgy, or a disposition to consider the sermon as the most important part of the service, a clergyman, particularly a young one, may easily be tempted to humour this prejudice by arbitrary curtailment, or rapid reading, or by the introduction of extemporaneous prayers. In each of these ways he is tacitly casting a slur upon the Church, and sanctioning one of the principles most opposed to her doctrine and spirit. Another mode of compromise, which is not less objectionable, is the holding of meetings on a Sunday out of the church, for purposes to which the Church Service is destined, without making use of it. There are, I fear, not a few cases in which a Lecture in a schoolroom, or some other common building, is substituted for the Church Service, while the church remains closed. Such a practice appears to me equivalent to an admission, that our form of prayer is really a bar, not a help, to devotion, and may be advantageously superseded by the minister's occasional effusions. I cannot distinguish such meetings from conventicles: the presence and presidency of the Clergyman only renders the implied admission the more glaring and pernicious. It is a breach of faith to the Church, as well as a violation of an express engagement. The same remark applies to every departure from the Rubric, grounded on no other motive than deference to the taste and prejudices of a part of the congregation. Other and perhaps still graver objections apply to a practice derived from the same source, according to which meetings are, I

believe, frequently held for the purpose of prayer, not common, according to the forms of the Church, nor offered by the minister alone, but by as many of the persons present as choose to join in it. I would not seek to impose a restraint on any spontaneous exercise of private devotion: but in meetings so numerous and open that they cannot properly be called private, it is not only to be regretted that the place and form which the Church has provided should be thus neglected, but there is too much reason to fear, that the spirit of display and curiosity will be constantly apt to quench that of true devotion: and the persons who have been accustomed to take a leading part in these exercises, will not only be likely to feel but little interest in the ordinary service of the Church, but will be easily tempted to come forward on other occasions still more prominently, as teachers, and thus in both ways to supersede the office of the appointed Pastor. In fact, as our Church exercises her office of Teacher, no less by her forms of prayer, than by her Catechism, Articles, Homilies, and other doctrinal formularies, so persons thus praying in public are in fact assuming the same office. That they should be allowed to do so by a Minister of the Church, in his presence, seems to me a virtual abdication of his charge, a direct encouragement to schism.

It is often difficult for a minister to draw the line between his private and public ministrations. The private visit, if it attracts the attendance of a numerous company, will acquire the character of a public

meeting, for worship and instruction, for which the Church has provided certain forms, and for which there is in every parish an appropriate public place. But there may be circumstances, in which he has, on such occasions, opportunities of addressing many whom he could not at that time collect for the daily service, or perhaps be ever likely to see in the Church at all; and of addressing them in a manner better suited to their peculiar wants and habits, more likely to reach their understandings, and to affect their consciences, than he could properly adopt in his public ministry. Such opportunities, no doubt, ought not to be neglected. But on the other hand it will be proper to remember, that such exercises, however useful in themselves, do not answer the purpose of that visitation of the sick, in which it is a main part of the Pastor's duty to inquire into the sick person's condition, and to adapt his discourse to the answers he may receive; an object, for which greater privacy seems generally desirable. It is also necessary to be cautious, that these meetings do not by degrees assume a different character, and become occasions of schism. The best effect which can result from them, and which a zealous and judicious minister will keep steadily in view, would be that they should lead to the foundation of a weekly Lecture in the Church.

I would add, that there may be omissions, proceeding from the same motive, which may do no less wrong to the Church, than the deviations from her Rubric, which I have been noticing. In her Prayer

Book she has so provided for the public instruction of her children, that the leading doctrines and facts of our religion are constantly, in regular succession, brought before their minds in the course of the daily Service. But the practical application of this principle is left to depend very much on the Minister, who in his discourses may either observe or neglect this order; and, more especially in places where the Sermon occupies perhaps an undue share of attention, unless, by his choice of subjects, he seconds the intention of the Church, it will be very imperfectly realised by the greater part of the congregation. The omission of topics naturally suggested by the season, will probably be interpreted, either as a tacit acknowledgement that they were not of sufficient importance to justify the Church in her commemoration of them, or that such a distinction of times is itself indefensible. The more reason there may be to apprehend that such opinions are entertained by a large part of the hearers, the more desirable it is that every such opportunity should be diligently employed, both to explain and defend, and practically to illustrate and recommend the ordinances of the Church.

In general, more benefit may be expected from an assiduous use of the means which the Church prescribes, than from any extraordinary methods, foreign to her system, and borrowed from her adversaries, though these may appear more promising, and may for a time be actually more successful in attracting hearers. It must be remembered, that this kind of

success is always of an ambiguous nature, and at the best is only desirable as a means, not as the end, which is not merely to gather large congregations, but to form a people really attached to the Church, and giving her a decided and intelligent preference. It is so far from being all in all, that it would be hurtful to her interests, if it involved a sacrifice of her principles, or was obtained by expedients which cherished a spirit opposed to her's. It may often require a difficult exercise of patience, and courage, and faith, to abstain from such seemingly innocent compliances with tastes and prejudices, the existence of which we regret: but it is a case in which we may find room to apply the prophet's exhortation, (Is. xxx. 15,) "In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength." Often the most zealous must be content with sowing the seed, without even a hope that they shall be permitted to gather or see the harvest. And in fact, their most useful and important labours must be of this kind. At least, they cannot expect to reap at once, or very soon, the fruits of that which they spend on the education of the young: and yet this is in all cases a main part of their duty; and where we have least reason to be satisfied with the actual condition of the Church, it is to this that we must look almost exclusively for the improvement of her prospects.

Much I believe remains to be done in every part of the Diocese for the education of the poor. At the same time, I am persuaded that the defect has not arisen from any want of zeal and activity on the part

of the Clergy. I have no reason to doubt that they are generally impressed with a eonviction of the vast importance of the subject, and that they have shewn themselves ready to exert their utmost endeavours, and to make great personal sacrifices, to promote the cause of education. But I fear there are still but too many cases, in which their efforts have failed, either because they have not been sufficiently seconded by the good will of the opulent laity, or because they have been obstructed by local difficulties, which they have hitherto been unable to overcome, in their attempts to provide for the support of a teacher, or the erection of a schoolroom. And this appears to be most frequently the case, in places where the poverty of the labourers renders them unable, or at least, unwilling, to contribute, even the smallest amount, toward the expence of instruction for their children. It seems to be but very rarely that the temporary sojourn of the Circulating Schools—to which nevertheless it must be owned the country has been deeply indebted—has been followed by the permanent establishment of others. Still I have the satisfaction to believe, that the number of cases in which there is a total deficiency of means of instruction for the children of the poor, is rapidly decreasing, and I venture to hope, that the time is not distant, when this want shall be every where in some degree supplied. But all the information I have been able to collect on the state of education in the Diocese, leads me to think, that in most places where it is afforded, it stands in

great need of improvement. It appears to me that sufficient attention has not been paid to the qualifications of the teachers. I am aware indeed that the scantiness of the remuneration allotted to them may often render it impossible to insist upon all the conditions which are known to be desirable. But still I believe that it would not be difficult to raise the present ordinary standard, and to exact from the persons employed such an amount of skill and information, as will enable them to impart something more than those first rudiments, which are not so properly knowledge, as the instruments by which the child is enabled to acquire it. It would of course be highly desirable, that every teacher should be qualified, not only to teach the letters, but to explain the sense, of the books used in the school, that he should be able to communicate the first elements of vocal music, and that he should be practically familiar with the most improved methods of instruction that have been adopted in the best schools of the same kind. And I am persuaded that these qualifications would soon become much more common, if an opportunity was afforded to persons who wished to prepare themselves for the office of teacher, of seeing a school conducted according to the best system, by one who possessed these advantages, and which would thus at the same time answer the purpose of a model and a training school.

You will not, I am sure, think that I attach an exaggerated importance to vocal music as a part of popular education, because I have mentioned an

acquaintance with it among what I should wish to see considered as the indispensable qualifications of a schoolmaster for the poor. Your experience will undoubtedly have convinced you, that the value of this attainment can hardly be estimated too highly, with a view to its moral and religious uses. You know better than I could explain, the great benefit which might be expected to result to the performance of public worship, both as to the degree in which it would realize the intentions of our Church, and the influence it would exercise over the people, if this knowledge and skill were more generally diffused among the lower classes, and perhaps I may add, that the natural taste and habits of the indigenous population seem to offer peculiar facilities for its diffusion. But there is another point, perhaps still more intimately connected with their welfare, and with the prospects of the Church, which does not seem to be always considered in the right point of view by those who have the superintendence of schools for the poor, and therefore deserves a few remarks in this place. An opinion seems to have prevailed, that it is useless, or even inexpedient, where English is not the mother tongue of the people, to teach them to read their own language. I am convinced that this maxim is quite erroneous, and attended with many practical consequences, injurious both to the people and to the Church. I believe the ordinary effect to be, that they acquire but a very imperfect command over either language: that which

they habitually speak gives them no access to books, and the books which they are able to read are seldom intelligible to them without more application than they have often time to bestow on any intellectual labour. They consequently remain destitute of that information which they might have derived with ease and pleasure from works written in their own language: they can join but imperfectly in the public Service of the Church, and are therefore the more easily persuaded to forsake it, while the Church has no means of reaching them through the press, and is compelled to abandon them, without a struggle, to all the errors and prejudices they may imbibe, when they are withdrawn from the oral instruction of her ministers. It seems therefore highly desirable, that in all such cases both languages should be taught together, and there can be little doubt that this practice would be attended with a more rapid progress in each.

But though it may be reasonably hoped, that by such means a very considerable improvement may be effected in popular education among us, I am perfectly aware, that there are causes which render it necessary, if we would spare ourselves the pain of disappointment, to confine our expectations within limits far short of our wishes. The results which we may look for from the most successful application of the most approved system, under the most zealous and able management, must still depend on circumstances over which we have no controul, and which will, it is to be feared, in most cases, tend to reduce the amount

of good which can be accomplished by our utmost exertions. The early age at which the parents find or think it necessary to take their children away from school, that they may begin to contribute by their labour to the support of the family, will often put a stop to the work of education before it has passed far beyond the simplest elements of instruction. It will be for each of you to use all your influence to prevent any needless sacrifice of the highest interests of the rising generation to selfish calculations of petty immediate advantage: to consider how far the establishment of evening schools may remedy the evil where it cannot be prevented, and to see that the time allowed for the purpose of education be turned by judicious economy to the best account. You will, I am sure, be fully sensible, that the stock of general knowledge to be acquired by the children of the poor, is a point of secondary importance: that the main object is the formation of habits and principles which will affect their character and conduct through life. Permit me however to observe, that however prematurely the child's school-education may be brought to a close, there can be no absolute necessity that your intercourse with him should terminate at the same time. He may still be within the reach of your weekly catechetical instruction: and it is on this account peculiarly important that this branch of your pastoral duties should be diligently administered, and in a manner calculated both to instruct and edify, and to interest the youthful mind. And it is probably never

more likely to answer these ends, and at the same time to strengthen the attachment of those of riper years to the Church, than where such instruction is given, according to the intention of the Church, in the presence of the congregation. I am convinced that many of our Churches would be much better attended, if this practice were revived. Where the religious instruction has been continued until the child becomes a candidate for confirmatiou, the task of preparation for that important rite will cost you much less trouble and anxiety, while the prospect of benefit from it will be greatly improved. Where on the other hand that instruction has been for some years either wholly neglected or intermitted, the opportunity afforded by a confirmation for inculcating religious principles is doubly precious, as it may be the first and the last you have to expect. But in all cases, and in every point of view, it is of incalculable value, and deserves your most earnest attention. Since the advantages to be derived from the rite depend on the state of the candidate, and this again is determined much less by his years, than by the preparation he has received, it may not be expedient to establish any inflexible regulation as to the age of admission: though, as a general rule, it may be desirable that none should be received before they have completed their fifteenth year. But in all cases it is most essential that the preparation should embrace a period of sufficient length to allow time for such examination as may satisfy the minister as to the

real qualifications of the candidates, and for such instruction in the leading doctrines of their religion, as will enable them both clearly to understand the nature of the rite, and to receive a durable impression from it.

The subjects to which I have been hitherto directing your attention, appeared to me the most important with regard to the circumstances of the Church in this Diocese, and the time they have occupied has left but little to spare for any others. Yet I cannot but feel that I might not only be disappointing a natural and reasonable expectation, but neglecting a valuable opportunity, and that I might seem to be shrinking from the discharge of a duty, if I were to pass over some other questions, which deeply affect the general interests of the Church, and which have been for some years past, and still are, subjects of earnest controversy. This controversy, it is true, can scarcely be said to have found its way into this Diocese: here it has attracted comparatively little notice, and those of the Clergy who have paid any attention to it, have, I believe, for the most part, viewed it as from a distance, and with scarcely a livelier feeling than one of speculative curiosity: and this may look like a reason why it might have been better to abstain from adverting to it on this occasion. But I am not at liberty to suppose that views and opinions which are elsewhere exercising a powerful practical influence on a great part of the body to which we belong, can be a matter of indifference to any of us; nor does our present

tranquillity afford any security, that they may not become an occasion of discord, which would weaken our hands and multiply our difficulties. But it does enable me to address you on the subject with somewhat less apprehension than I should otherwise have felt, of giving offence, while it seems to impose on me the duty of directing my remarks to points which have a bearing on our own peculiar circumstances. That you have been permitted to stand aloof, and have had no inducement to take an active part in that controversy, and have thus been exempted from the passions and prejudices which it has excited elsewhere, and have been enabled to form an impartial judgement upon the questions involved in it, this I consider as an advantage in your present position, which I trust you will not be eager to part with; and I hope I scarcely need to caution you against enlisting yourselves on either side, before you have made yourselves fully acquainted with the merits of the case. This forbearance, which is so clearly enjoined both by justice and prudence, will no doubt appear to you the more important, when you compare the great bulk of the literature which this controversy has produced, with your ordinary means and opportunities of studying it, and especially when you observe the learning, ability, zeal, and piety, which have been exhibited on both sides. You will be the more reluctant to exchange the attitude of spectators for that of partisans, where both the contending parties present so many claims to respect, and you will be the less ready to

believe that either is in exclusive possession of the truth.

However this may be, it will probably seem to many persons a calamity to be deeply deplored, that gifts and qualities such as I have just mentioned, which, if harmoniously employed, might have rendered the most important services to the Church, should have been arrayed in conflict againt each other; and no doubt it would have been much more desirable that they should have been drawn forth, in an equal degree of activity, by combined exertions for the common cause. But I cannot on this account concur with those who would regard the controversy as a subject of unmixed regret, or who think that any evil has hitherto arisen from it, which has not been much more than counterbalanced by its beneficial effects. I just now alluded to the bulk of its literary productions: of those which may be considered as immediately and visibly representing it. But the mass of publications which though not—professedly at least—of a controversial nature, are intimately connected with it, and have not only taken their tone and colour from it, but could not have existed without it, is far greater, and I cannot but regard the whole, though including much that has no more than a fugitive or historical value, as a precious addition to our theological literature, such as might perhaps suffer little by comparison with all that it had received in the course of a century before. And yet it is chiefly valuable and interesting as an expression or indica-

tion of the new life which has been recently awakened in the Church. Others may regret that public attention should have been so much turned this way, and diverted from the subjects which appear to them of supreme importance—from politics, or science, or political economy, or classical literature: but, speaking to you on this occasion, I can only treat it as a matter for mutual congratulation, that, through whatever cause, a spirit should have been roused, which has engaged so many active and powerful minds in the cultivation of theological learning. As churchmen, we must rejoice, that the study of Divinity should have begun to embrace a wider range than, for a long period before, had satisfied the greater part of those who dedicated themselves to the ministry, that it should have become more generally conversant with Christian antiquity, with Ecclesiastical History, and with the original sources from which the knowledge of these subjects is derived; so that even ordinary students much less frequently confine their reading to a narrow circle of modern compilations, systems, outlines, and commentaries, and not only are used to carry their inquiries farther, but are more desirous of seeing and judging for themselves. All this indeed would be of little value, if the spirit which has been awakened had been one of merely literary curiosity, or intellectual energy. But every one who has observed its workings, must be aware that the case is very far otherwise: that it is bent, with a deep consciousness, and warm earnestness, upon high

practical ends. It may even be doubted, whether there is not some danger, lest this practical tendency should be carried to excess, and lead to the neglect and discouragement of all critical inquiries into theological subjects, not obviously or immediately pointing to practical results. But it is more important, as well as more pleasing, to observe, that the interest thus excited appears to have given a new impulse to the zeal of the friends of the Church, which has urged them to extraordinary exertions in her behalf. It will hardly be considered by any one as a mere casual coincidence, that the last ten years should have been so signally marked by so many important undertakings in aid of her cause, begun in a confidence which not long ago would have been deemed romantic, and accomplished by sacrifices which would then have appeared almost inconceivable.

Still, whatever may be the amount of the advantage thus gained, it would undoubtedly be too dearly purcased, if the price paid for it were the admission of unsound doctrines, or a breach of unity, in the Church: and there are many persons who believe—this indeed is the very gist of the controversy—that one of these evils has befallen us, and to such a degree, that our only prospect of a remedy lies in the other: and there are others who, though differing widely in their view of the cause, look forward to the same result, some with friendly uneasiness, others with hostile exultation. Unhappily it cannot be denied that there is some ground for these anticipations: they are often

expressed in a manner which tends to realise them: but still I trust that we are yet far removed from such a deplorable alternative. And as I am sure that you, my Reverend Brethren, all sympathize with me in the wish that this should prove to be the case, it may not be useless to state the reasons which have led me to this opinion, and which induce me to contemplate the present state of the controversy with much more of hope than of alarm.

The main ground of my persuasion is briefly this: that the controversy which now agitates the Church is not a new one: that, though distinguished by some peculiar features, yet at the bottom it is nothing more than a revival, or, as we may choose to call it, a continuation, of one which is as old as the first establishment of our Church: that it represents a contrast of opinions, views, and feelings, which has never ceased to exist within her pale, though varying in its outward demonstrations according to the shifting phases of her historical developement: sometimes apparently dormant and inactive, at others breaking out, as now, in passionate controversy, and at some unhappy epochs—such as we hope may never again be witnessed—venting itself in persecution, in violent exclusion, and formal rupture. It is not only an indisputable fact, that such an opposition or divergency always has existed within the Church, but it seems likewise to be a necessary result of her constitution and character. If the position which she has taken up, as a Reformed Church, is correctly described as a mean

between two extremes, it appears to be an inevitable consequence—so long as human nature continues what it is—that some of her members should incline toward one extreme, others toward its opposite, though all sincerely and equally attached to her doctrine and fellowship. If we are not ashamed of this character of moderation which distinguishes her, if, on the contrary, we rejoice in it, and regard it as her most honourable attribute, as the very stamp of prudence and charity combined, and the safest criterion of truth; then we must be content to pay the price of this high privilege, in that continual contrast of opinions, and that occasional collision of parties: though this view of the case ought undoubtedly to operate as a constant motive to mutual forbearance. It would indeed have been surprising, if, while the Church herself was accused by her Protestant adversaries of too great a leaning and resemblance to the Church of Rome, beeause she retained many things which they viewed as Romish errors and corruptions, those of her divines who laid the greatest stress on the things which were thus assailed, should not have incurred a like charge; or on the other hand, if those who most earnestly maintained the principles which separate her from the Roman Church, should not sometimes have fallen under a suspicion of indifference or disaffection toward the other parts of her system. This, which has in fact so often happened in former times, is the very thing which we are now witnessing.

I am aware, however, that this observation will

lead us but a little way toward a historical explanation of the present controversy, or of the movement which gave rise to it; and will still less enable us to understand what is peculiar in its character. It may be traced to a remote origin: but certainly it was not transmitted to us exactly in its present form. If the general outline remain the same, there is at least an air of novelty about its lineaments and colour: and however clearly we may perceive its identity, something more is required to account for its appearance at this time, and in this shape. There is indeed one very simple and easy way of cutting short this inquiry; that is, to refer the whole to some invisible supernatural agency. Viewed by different minds, and from opposite points, the same event may appear either as a gracious interposition of Divine Providence, or a machination of the great enemy of souls. So it was with the Reformation, and so it is with the movement which now agitates the Church. And doubtless in most events which have been brought about by human means, and extensively affected by human opinions, prejudices, and passions, there is such a mixture of good and evil, that even the same person may think he sees as much reason for referring them to the one author as to the other. But this is not the present question. As we should not understand the character of the Reformation at all the better, for being told that it was a work of God, so, to say, whether truly or not, that this movement is a device of Satan, would leave us as much as ever in the dark with regard to its

nature, occasion, and proximate causes. Nor again does it appear to me, that a knowledge of the immediate occasion from which it arose, can throw any light upon its nature, or assist us toward forming an estimate of its worth. But we do gain a notion of it, which, though it may not be complete, is certainly very important, and perhaps the only one with which, as Ministers of the Church, we are practically concerned, when we are led by the language both of its friends and its adversaries, to consider it as a reaction, an attempt to counteract a religious system, which it found existing, and gaining ground within the Church. According to the descriptions which have been given of this system by those who profess to be resisting it, it is represented as one which undervalues the authority of the Church, disregards her ordinances, neglects her ritual, disparages the sacraments, virtually abandons some of her peculiar doctrines, destroys the proportion of her theology, and contracts its compass, by the undue prominence given to a few articles of faith, substitutes empty phrases, barren, unreal notions, sensible excitement, feelings, and impressions, for the substance of religion, for true devotion, for the conscientious discharge of social duties, for habits of self-denial and charity, for the diligent cultivation and practical exercise of Christian virtues; and thus tends to diffuse a kind of antinomianism, which is only the more dangerous, on account of the subtlety and refinement, by which it eludes superficial observation, and abstains from all that would offend decency and common sense.

If it were true that such a system as this had been introduced into the Church, and was making progress, there can be no doubt that those who undertook to expose and combat it would be entitled to our sympathy, even though we might not agree with them in all their principles, or approve of all the remedies they proposed for the evil. But though it is certain that one of the parties in the controversy represents itself as contending against such a system, several of their opponents have not only indignantly disclaimed all connexion with it, but have seemed altogether to deny its existence, and to treat it as a mere fiction, with which their antagonists have either deceived themselves, or endeavoured to impose upon others: and which tends, in its effect, if not in its design, to check the growth of vital religion, by casting undeserved obloquy on a portion of the Church, which is more especially distinguished by its close adherence to the principles of the Gospel, even if it be not entitled to a name, which imports that it is in the exclusive possession of them. There would indeed be just ground for the indignation which has been expressed on this subject, if the system above described had ever been imputed to the individuals who have disavowed it. But it seems perfectly consistent with the highest respect for them, and with the fullest admission of every thing they have asserted with regard to their own consciousness, practice, experience, and observation, to believe, that the evil is not so purely imaginary as they have represented it. It is a question of

fact, on which no man ought to accept another's assertion as proof. But in the absence of what can never be given—a proof of the negative—it seems no more than common charity requires, to believe that those who profess to be setting themselves against such a system, are sincerely convinced of its reality. As little can I doubt, that this conviction has been shared by numbers beside, and that this has been a main cause of the acceptance which writings directed against the system have met with. My own opinion on such a point can have no more weight than that of any other person, who has been used to pay attention to such subjects. But I must avow that the result of my observation has been a very strong impression both of the reality, and of the extensive prevalence of the evil.

And this suggests another remark, which may possibly be of some use toward soothing the apprehensions of persons who view the course which the controversy has taken with alarm. When we hear of a school or party, which is charged with an attempt to introduce dangerous innovations into the Church, and are informed, that it comprises a large proportion of the Clergy, and a great number of the Laity, it is very necessary that we should accustom ourselves to distinguish between the Teachers and the Disciples, the Guides and the Followers : that we should remember that there may be a general sympathy and approbation, which does not exclude many differences of opinion, even on important points ; that general prin-

ciples may be adopted, but not in the sense or the spirit in which they were propounded, and without any of the inferences which are drawn from them, either by their advocates, or their impugners. Indeed examples of such partial disagreement have already appeared: nor perhaps would it be difficult to point out indications of considerable divergency in the writers who are considered as the leaders and organs of the party. But at least there seems to be no reason to suspect that the mass of those with whom their principles have found favour, are not heartily attached to the Church in her present form, or that they are dissatisfied with the language of her formularies, or desirous of any change in her public worship, not perfectly consistent with her existing Canons and Rubric.

But to many persons all that I have been hitherto saying on this subject will probably appear quite foreign to what they regard as the main question: that is, whether errors have not been maintained within the Church, by some of her authorised teachers, which are so clearly subversive of the fundamental articles of her faith, that they cannot be safely tolerated. The question, it must be observed, is not as to the absolute and exact coincidence of every thing that has been advanced with the doctrine of the Church, but as to the amount and importance of any supposed departure from it: not whether statements have been made, which are not fully borne out by her authentic language, but whether any such as are essentially

inconsistent with her vital principles: so far exceeding the just limits of private speculation, as to violate the terms of communion, and to render those who persist in them guilty of a breach of their most solemn ministerial engagements. Much may have been said that may demand very earnest attention, that may be a fit subject for warning or censure: but if it stop short of this point, it ought not to disturb the peace of the Church, but may be safely left to await the issue of free discussion. I must own that I have hitherto met with nothing to convince me, that matters have been brought to such a melancholy extremity. It would manifestly be both impracticable and unseasonable to enter at large into the grounds on which my judgement has been formed: but I will offer a few observations on some of the subjects with regard to which others seem to have been led to an opposite conclusion.

Though different writers have fixed on different points in the system of their opponents, as the hinges of the controversy, the most prominent place seems to have been generally assigned to the doctrine which is the subject of our eleventh Article, and which has been emphatically described as the test of a standing or falling Church. A very elaborate theory has been proposed on this subject by an eminent writer,* which has been denounced on the other side as radically false and utterly irreconcilable with our Church's

* Newman. Lectures on Justification.

teaching on that head: and equally elaborate attempts have been made to shew, that this is the root from which all the other errors of the author's system have sprung. With regard to my own impression, I can only say, that after the closest attention I could give to the dispute, I view it as one of words, involving no real difference of opinion, and consequently look upon both parties as in this respect equally orthodox. But there are some facts, which, if they do not clearly point to the same conclusion, seem to me to furnish a strong reason for the exercise of peculiar caution and moderation in our judgements on this question. One of these facts is, that the modern theory is admitted to harmonise very closely with that of Bishop Bull, who certainly believed his views to be in perfect accordance with the formularies of his Church, and though warmly attacked, was never, as far as I know, charged with any of the consequences which have been supposed to flow from them in their more recent form. And I may add, that the work in which Bishop Bull proposed his theory, the *Harmonia Apostolica,* was strongly recommended to the Clergy of this Diocese by Bishop Horsley in his Charge at his Primary Visitation, as a "preservative from the contagion of the Antinomian folly." Another fact, still more important, and I think not sufficiently borne in mind, is, that the principal terms employed in the discussion of the subject, which are therefore of most frequent occurrence, admit of so many different senses, that there is perpetual danger of confusion and misunder-

standing :† so that an eager disputant may carry on the contest through a bulky volume, and yet leave his antagonist's position untouched. When this is the case, nothing is more natural than that complaints should be made of obscurity, confusion, paradox, and self-contradiction : and accordingly, in no part of the controversy do we hear such complaints more frequently and strongly expressed, than in that which relates to this point.‡ But though I have not been able to perceive that the doctrine of the eleventh Article has been put in any peril by the manner in which it is exhibited in that theory, or that the theory affords the slightest countenance to the Romish doctrine of Merit, I am not the less convinced that the ordinary mode of stating the doctrine of our Church, against which the author so vehemently protests, both expresses it correctly, and sufficiently guards, so far as words can do so, against the abuse of it : and I know of nothing that is likely to be gained by the substitution of any other, unless it be, that it may serve to rouse attention, to exercise thought, and to prevent the mechanical repetition, and consequent idolising, of a formula.

Much offence and alarm has been caused by statements with regard to the relation between Scripture

† See Jeremy Taylor's Sermon : *Fides Formata.* Works, Vol. vi. p. 268, ed. Heber.

‡ It seems very doubtful whether a collection of seemingly paradoxical and self-contradictory passages torn from the context of a closely reasoned work, can contribute much either to enlighten the ignorant, or to convince gainsayers.

and Tradition, which have been put forward on one side as neglected and almost forgotten truths, and condemned on the other as repugnant to the spirit at least of our Sixth Article, and a virtual abandonment of a fundamental principle of our Reformation. No topic of the recent controversy has been more fruitful than this: none, it may perhaps be added, has led to more important and profitable inquiries. If it be true, as seems hardly to be denied, that tradition had not only become "to most of us an unpalatable word," but one of "vague use," and "closely associated in most men's minds with a whole host of partialities and antipathies," then certainly we have reason to congratulate ourselves, that so much has been done of late to clear up its ambiguity, to distinguish and ascertain its various meanings, and to enable us, whether we relish it or not, to use it calmly and soberly, in its proper place, and with a right conception of its import. For my present purpose it will be sufficient to express my opinion, that the progress of the controversy has shewn that the difference between the two parties on this point is not one of principle, but of fact. There is no dispute as to the nature of the supreme authority in matters of faith: it is admitted to be not the decision of uninspired men in any age, much less of any human arbitrator, but the teaching of our Lord and His Apostles: but one question is, whether any record of that teaching is still to be found, beside that which is contained in Holy Writ. Those who have most magnified the authority of

Tradition have proceeded on the supposition, express or implied, that the Tradition they speak of has preserved a portion of that teaching. They are met with the assertion, that either no such record exists, or that it is impossible to discover it. This is certainly a fair subject for historical investigation and argument. But it is not this that constitutes the most interesting and important point of variance: the main point is the relation in which Tradition is made to stand to Scripture. If Scripture not only contains all things necessary to salvation, but delivers them so plainly that every one may find them there for himself, it is comparatively of little moment, whether fragments of the teaching of our Lord and His Apostles have or have not been preserved elsewhere. But if Scripture itself needs an interpreter, it becomes a question of the highest importance, whether there exists any Tradition capable of discharging that office, and how far it is to be trusted. And here the divergency between the opposite parties appears at first sight very great indeed: the one urging all that can be said to prove the obscurity of Scripture, the other insisting on its plainness and perspicuity. Nevertheless, on closer inspection, the points on which they agree will perhaps be found both more numerous and more essential than those on which they differ. It seems to be admitted on both sides, that the right understanding of Scripture is not to be attained by the exercise of the unassisted reason; that it depends on certain moral conditions, and a certain measure of

spiritual illumination. And even those who contend that this is the only assistance absolutely necessary, would hardly deny, that the experiment has rarely, if ever, been tried: or that the persons who come to the study of Scripture with such assistance, also generally bring with them notions and impressions derived from early instruction. Nor again is it maintained by either party, that the sufficiency of Scripture is such as to render all other external helps to the right understanding of it useless. That would be condemned as a mark of ignorant presumption, or of blind enthusiasm. It is admitted, that "there are many useful guides to the truth besides the Scriptures, of which the writings of the early Fathers are one, and an important one."* But further, it is not pretended, that to appeal to the consent of primitive antiquity, for the purpose of ascertaining the sense of Scripture on articles of faith, is any peculiarity of the modern school which is charged with unduly exalting the authority of Tradition. On the contrary it has been laid down by an eminent living divine, who is not only unconnected with that school, but one of its most zealous opponents, that "in the settlement of articles of faith on the authority of Scripture, the principle of the Anglican Church is that of an appeal to the recorded consent of primitive antiquity from the very beginning."†

* Goode. *Divine Rule of Faith and Practice*, I. p. 18.

† Faber: *Primitive Doctrine of Justification*, 2d ed. p. 3

Here indeed it has been justly observed by others, that if this consent is to be taken in its strict sense, as including the assent of every individual Christian in any age of the Church, it is something which either never existed, or at least is utterly incapable of proof. And this observation—if it was ever needed—is certainly very valuable. But how far the consent of the great majority may be properly considered as answering the same purpose, and again, how far such a consent is represented by any records which have been preserved to us—these are questions on which every one may be allowed to form his own opinion. So far then we discover no difference as to any principle which is peculiar to any modern school. But when we proceed a step further, we meet with an apparent difference of principle, and one which has been represented as of vital moment. For the consent of antiquity, in whatever sense it is understood, may be regarded either as simply the evidence of a witness, or as the authoritative decision of an infallible judge. And this indeed sounds like a very important distinction, though I must own that it appears to me a difference more of sound than of substance. For if it is the character of the witness, and not the nature of his testimony, that makes his evidence decisive, it seems to matter little, as to the practical result, which view we take. The exercise of private judgement on the doctrine delivered is equally excluded by each. But even this point is one in which the controversy of our day is not con-

cerned. The party which appeals to the consent of antiquity professes to hold, that "the Scripture is the sole authoritative source of the Faith," i. e. "of things to be believed in order to salvation, and that the church only testifies to her children what truths are necessary to be believed in order to salvation, in subjection to scripture ; and even when she determines controversies, does this not in the character of a judge, but as a witness to what she herself received."* I am aware, unhappily, that it has been not unfrequently insinuated, that such professions are not to be trusted. I do not inquire whether insinuations of this kind are charitable or just. I only notice them for the purpose of remarking, that when we are speaking about terms of communion, it is only the doctrines which men profess that we can take as the ground of our judgement, as we have no other means of discovering what they really hold. For the same reason I pass over the attempts which have been made, by disputable inferences, to prove, that a principle has been admitted, in appeals to tradition on points as to which Scripture is silent, which, if

* Pusey : *Letter to Bishop of Oxford*, p. 31, 3d ed. The whole passage runs thus :—"In brief, then, my Lord, the meaning of our Church (as we conceive) in these Articles is, that the Scripture is the sole authoritative source of the Faith, i. e. of 'things to be believed in order to salvation;' the Church is the medium through which that knowledge is conveyed to individuals; she, under her responsibility to God, and in subjection to His Scripture, and with the guidance of His Spirit, testifies to her children, what truths are to be believed in order to salvation; expounds Scripture to them ; determines when controversies arise ; and this, not in the character of a judge, but as a 'witness' to what she herself received."

followed out, would open a door for the corruptions of Romanism. And on the other hand I must observe, that the object which I have now in view does not lead me even to inquire, whether the language which has been employed to convey certain views of doctrine, is not liable to grave objections, or just censure, as ambiguous, or unguarded, harsh, extravagant, and ill sounding. It is not with modes of expression that we are at present concerned, but with the nature of the things expressed. This is a remark which it is particularly necessary to bear in mind, when we proceed to touch upon another class of questions, which has been the subject of very vehement controversy, those I mean which relate to the doctrine of the Apostolical succession in its connexion with that of the Sacraments.

Here we must be careful not to lose sight of the distinction between the doctrines themselves, and the connexion in which they stand, or have been placed, with one another. For it is this connexion, very much more than the doctrines themselves, or even the manner in which they have been stated, that has given offence to many excellent persons. It is not I believe disputed by any one, that what is called the high doctrine of the Apostolical Succession (including, i. e., not only the historical fact, that the ministry of our church is derived by uninterrupted descent from the Apostles, but likewise that it was established by them as a permanent and unalterable institution, to be continued according to certain invariable regula-

tions) I say it is hardly disputed that this doctrine has been held by so large a part of our best divines, and has received so much apparent countenance from the anxiety shown to preserve the succession when it was in danger of interruption, that it would be unreasonable to complain of it as a novelty, or even to represent it as being now exclusively held by a particular school. Again, whatever ground there may be for the charge brought against one party in the controversy, that it has exaggerated the importance and the efficacy of the Sacraments, it does not appear to involve any question of principle. Indeed, since the church herself teaches, that the Sacraments are *generally necessary to salvation,* it seems difficult for any one to exaggerate their importance, unless he were to hold, what I believe no one maintains, that the necessity is not merely general, but universal and absolute.

So, language may have been used, which afforded just reason for jealousy and fear, lest their dignity should be so magnified as to exclude the use of other means of grace, or as to substitute means for ends, or as to encourage the belief that their efficacy is wholly independent of internal qualifications. But since these consequences are disavowed by those who have been charged with them, it does not seem possible to draw a line between the general principles of the opposite parties on this head. But it has been very truly observed, that "men may over-estimate the efficacy of the sacraments, to the disparagement of

prayer and preaching, and reading the Scriptures, and yet be perfectly clear from the opinion which makes this efficacy depend immediately on a human administrator. And so again, men may hold episcopacy to be divine, and the episcopacy of apostolical succession to be the only true episcopacy, but yet they may utterly reject the notion of its being essential to the efficacy of the Sacraments."* And the opinion of such a connexion between the two doctrines has been condemned both as groundless and pernicious. But I conceive that it may not be useless to observe, that there is a sense in which the connexion between them would be neither so arbitrary, nor pregnant with such dangerous consequences. If any one believes that the ministerial commission may be traced through the Apostles to the Head of the Church, and that it was originally designed to comprehend the administration of the Sacraments, then he will be naturally led to consider the character of the Minister as a part of the ordinance: and it will follow, that he cannot look upon it as altogether immaterial, whether this part be absent or not: he will not venture to say that the ordinance would be, to all intents and purposes, the same without it: and this he might express by saying that the apostolical succession is requisite for the *due application of it*. But it would not follow that he undertakes to pronounce how far it is an essential part, or to what degree its absence affects the efficacy

* Arnold: *Sermons on Christian Life.* Introduction, p. xxxvii.

of the rite, or that there are not many circumstances in which it may be safely omitted, and in which its place will be surely and effectually supplied.† In a word, there appears to be nothing in the doctrine itself that is exclusive or uncharitable, beyond what is implied in a strong preference of one communion over another. Its character will depend on the temper in which it is embraced: and since those who maintain it most firmly, still declare their belief that "God's favour is not limited to the bounds of his heritage, but that, in the Church, or out of the Church, every one that calleth on the name of the Lord with a pure and perfect heart, shall be saved,"‡ we would hope that its influence may in most cases be found consistent both with charity and humility. The prudence of putting forward such a doctrine as an instrument of controversy, is a different question. A weapon which may irritate an adversary, but does not weaken him, would seem to be best kept in its sheath. Those who are already hostile to the Church, are not likely to be won by the revival of what they must deem an extravagant pretension: and those who are indifferent to her more evident advantages, will hardly be attracted by one so questionable, and so remote from common apprehension, that the belief in it is enter-

† Compare an extract from a work of Bishop Cosin, in Brewer's Memoir of the Author, prefixed to his edition of *The History of Popish Transubstantiation*, p. xxxi.

‡ Newman. *Sermons*, vi. p. 186.

tained with reluctance by many of those who admit it.§

I shall touch very briefly on another subject, which has, I think, occupied an undue share of public attention, and has excited much misplaced feeling: and indeed, but for that notoriety, I should have had no inducement on this occasion to notice it at all. I mean the Tracts "on Reserve in communicating religious knowledge." The point of the charges which have been made against their author is, that he had recommended the suppressing or withholding some of the fundamental truths of religion. He himself however has publicly disclaimed the meaning imputed to him, and has denied that it could be fairly inferred from his language. According to his own professions, his object was not to recommend or sanction the suppression of religious knowledge, but to lay down the principles which, as he conceived, ought to regulate the mode of communicating it. Now here, as before, I do not inquire whether it be consistent with charity or candour to repeat the accusation just as if no such disavowal and explanation had ever been offered; it is enough to say, that the Church can properly take cognizance only of doctrines which are professed or acknowledged: as she cannot be reproached with allowing any of her Ministers to teach an erroneous doctrine which they have either retracted or disavowed. But the agitation

§ Advertisement to Vol. II. of the Tracts for the Times: quoted by Mr. Goode in his pamphlet, *The Case as it is*, p. 19.

which has been produced by the treatise in question, induces me to add a few remarks. When I consider the character of several of the persons by whom the author's meaning has been, according to his own assertion, misunderstood, I am not at liberty to doubt, that he must in some passages have expressed himself in obscure and incautious terms. On the other hand it is certain, that not a few readers who took up the tracts under an unfavorable prepossession derived from report and from quotations, were led by a perusal of the whole to a widely different conception of its real import. The title itself would certainly seem to indicate an object very different from suppression: as reserve in communicating appears to imply some kind of communication: not to mention the important distinction, with which we are all familiar in religious subjects, between the communication of knowledge as a merely intellectual process, and that of truth as a moral one. But if we take a much surer test than any of these, and judge of the author's drift from the character of the system which he professes to reprobate, we must be inclined to consider it rather as a protest against reserve, than a recommendation of it. If, as he, whether with or without good reason, assumed, there was a popular mode of teaching, which dwelt almost exclusively on a portion of the truth, so as virtually to withhold and suppress others not less important, the natural remedy for the evil would have been, not to keep one part back, but to bring the rest more prominently forward. That the treatise is

deficient in practical directions for the application of its principles, has been admitted by its defenders.* But it may still be profitable, if it tends to warn us against the danger of partial views and exhibitions of the truth, and to lead us more carefully to prserve both the fulness and the proportion of faith.

Some much more important, as well as difficult, questions are suggested by the last Tract of the Series, entitled "Remarks on certain passages in the Thirty-nine Articles." The objections which have been made to this essay—and it has incurred the censure of persons whose prepossessions were all in its favour—have been directed partly against the author's principle of interpretation, and partly against the manner in which he applies it in his treatment of the passages which are the subject of his remarks. And these are points which must be carefully distinguished, and considered separately. With regard to the principle itself, it appears to me that much misapprehension has prevailed, and that it has been stated by others in a manner which the writer's language does not warrant. It has been sometimes represented as if he held it allowable for one who subscribes the Articles to reject their obvious, literal, and grammatical sense, and to substitute another more conformable to his own preconceived notion of Catholic doctrine. This indeed is a principle which would be alarmingly dangerous, if it were not so

* See *A brief Analysis of the Tracts on Reserve in Communicating Religious Knowledge*, by Henry Arthur Woodgate, B. D.

flagrantly absurd. But I do not perceive that it is implied, either in the account which the author gives of his object, at the outset, or in the concluding remarks with which he meets a supposed objection. I hardly understand how it can be reconciled with either: his professed object being to shew, that the Articles contain no propositions or terms inconsistent with the Catholic faith: and the objection which he anticipates being, that the interpretation proposed, though it may give the grammatical sense, is not in harmony with the known opinions of the framers. The objection itself assumes, I think, that no violence has been done to the grammatical sense: and the answer given to it, though including several distinct heads, seems to amount to this: that one who subscribes to the Articles professes his assent to the opinions of their framers, so far as they are distinctly expressed in the Articles themselves, but no farther: and that he is not bound to adopt those which he may find recorded in their other writings, for the purpose of either limiting or enlarging the grammatical sense of the Articles: so that, where a proposition is expressed in general terms, he is at liberty to differ from the framers as to those points which are left undefined. The author conceives, and endeavours to shew by historical evidence, that the Articles were framed with the intention of allowing large room for difference of opinion on subordinate questions. His view of this subject has been severely censured, as subjecting our Reformers to the charge of disingenuous-

ness; which no doubt they would have justly incurred, if they had designedly used equivocal language. But a proposition may be general, yet not equivocal: it may be meant, and may serve, to secure unanimity among those who assent to it, to a certain extent, though not to exclude a variety of sentiments beyond that limit.

Whatever then may be thought as to the matter of fact, the principle of interpretation, so stated, appears to contain nothing either absurd or dangerous: and more than this, the author seems neither to have asked, nor—which is more important—to have wanted for his purpose. The manner in which he has applied his principle in the treatment of the Articles on which he has commented, is of course a totally distinct question. And here I think no impartial person can deny that there is much to justify the sensation of surprise and alarm which was excited in so many, and some very friendly quarters, by the first appearance of the Tract. This impression was perhaps the stronger, because the notion of a compromise between extreme opinions on a common ground had been least of all associated in most minds with the articles which it discusses. But even when this view has been admitted, the construction put upon several passages will certainly appear to ordinary readers excessively refined and artificial, such in fact as could scarcely have occurred to the writer, if his judgement had not been biassed by his wishes. Such is still my own impression, after all I have seen

adduced in defence or explanation of the tract, though I think it sufficient to repel the imputation of a conscious obliquity of view. And the character of the Church required that such a mode of interpreting her formularies should be publicly discountenanced. But on the other hand suspicions have been suggested by the Tract, as to the drift of the whole, and the ultimate tendency of the author's views, which appear to be wide of his real aim, and meaning. His interpretation of the Twenty-second Article, which, more than any other part of his Remarks, has given rise to these suspicions, is indeed, in my judgement, quite untenable. Even if the compilers of that Article had not been acquainted with the decrees of the Council of Trent on the subjects mentioned in it, they could not have described some of the grossest abuses of the unreformed practice as *the Romish doctrine,* nor would they probably have pronounced so mild a censure on such enormities as is expressed in the terms "a fond thing vainly invented, and grounded upon no warranty of Scripture, but rather repugnant to the word of God." This would surely have been at the same time much less and much more than belonged to such a subject. And again, whatever might have been the case with the framers of the Article, the authority which imposed it, after the decrees of the Council had been published, could not have thought that it did not condemn the Romish doctrine according to the latest and most authentic exposition of it. In fact, however, it was *the doctrine of the*

Schoolmen that the framers of the Article originally condemned, and the epithet *Romish* was afterwards substituted with distinct reference to the decrees of Trent. The author of the Tract therefore seems to have fallen into a manifest error, when he attempts, on chronological grounds, to limit the meaning of the Article, so as not to comprehend the decrees of the Council of Trent on the same points. But though his remark as to the date of the Articles is general, still, since the distinction which he draws between the Romish doctrine, and that of Trent, is strictly limited to this single Article —for in no other does the expression *Romish doctrine* occur—it cannot be inferred that he intended to intimate, that the teaching of the Council is consistent with that of the Church of England on any other points. It would indeed be sufficiently alarming to believe that he thought this was the case with regard to these. But though the language of the Tract, taken by itself, might very easily suggest such a surmise, and is on that account deserving of censure, as it might fall in the way of persons who had no other means of learning the author's real sentiments, I think it is clear from his subsequent explanation of his meaning, that the immediate purport of his remark was to signify a distinction between the letter of the decrees of Trent, and the spirit in which it has been interpreted in the Romish schools, and by the practice of the Church of Rome. And also that what he would have licensed as an admissible private opinion on the subject of the Article, is not recon-

cilable even with the letter of those decrees, unless on a very forced and arbitrary interpretation. But I must add, that the liberty for which he pleads on some points, is much larger than the grounds which he assigns for it. On subjects, as to which nothing can be known to us but by revelation, it cannot be altogether innocent, or safe, to adopt, even as matter of private belief, any doctrine which has not been revealed. It is either a presumptuous abuse of our mental faculties, or it is suffering ourselves to be *beguiled* by others, who have rashly and vainly *intruded into those things which they have not seen.* It diverts the mind from the contemplation of certain and useful truths: it tends directly to introduce superstitious practice. Even therefore if our Church had been silent as to the state of the departed—which is far from the case, since she makes it the subject of prayer—it would not have followed that any of her children is at liberty to hold a doctrine on that subject, as matter of belief, *whatever be its merits*, merely because it is in some sense *primitive,* and *is a possible or probable opinion,* that is to say, a conjecture not involving any absurdity: much less to hold a doctrine which is apparently as much opposed to that of our Church, as the idea of *punishment* is to that of *joy and felicity,* and *the absence of God's presence* to *the living with Him.*

Before I conclude, I must still advert to another feature in the controversy, which has contributed more than any other to give it that air of novelty which I

have already noticed. All the propositions maintained by the writers of the modern school put together, have probably produced much less effect on the mind of the public, than the language in which some of them have spoken of the Church of Rome on the one hand, and of our Reformers on the other. That divines of our communion should speak of the Roman Church in terms not merely of indulgence, but of reverence, of tenderness, of affection, while they spoke harshly and disparagingly, not to say bitterly and contemptuously, of the Reformers, the Reformation, and Protestantism, was not only startling and offensive, but raised a suspicion, that where so much was said in spite of public opinion, and against the spirit of the times, still more might be meant, and only reserved for a more favorable juncture. And this suspicion was of course greatly strengthened by expressions which fell from the same quarter, and which seemed to intimate a secret design of effecting some change of undefined extent in the character of our Church. Now such language, taken by itself, however unseemly, intemperate, uncharitable, and unjust, would not, as I have repeatedly observed, come within the scope of my present remarks. It is only because it has been represented as an alarming indication, and has excited apprehensions of danger, that I am now induced to notice it. And there are several considerations which lead me to think, that in this point of view its importance has been greatly exaggerated. It would perhaps be sufficient to say, not only ought large allow-

ance to be made for expressions dropped in the warmth of controversial discussion, but, it is not during the course of a controversy that the parties usually bestow their attention impartially on the opposite sides of a question, or are careful to balance their own judgements on men and things with those of their opponents, or to accompany their statements with all the modifications and supplements which may be necessary for a complete view of the subject. They are occupied with one aspect or portion of the truth, and may seem to forget that there is any other: they bring it prominently forward, and appear to depress all that they leave untouched: they omit what does not concern their immediate object, and are thought to exclude it. A person who is absorbed in the contemplation of some particular merit or defect of a system, will be apt to use general terms or illustrations, which would be improper and extravagant if applied to the whole: as, if he conceived that our Church was suffering deeply from the restraint laid upon her general assemblies, he might be tempted to speak of her condition as a degrading bondage, though he would be the last to approve of such language as a general description of her case. I think there is not only room to hope, but reason to believe, that this will prove to be the true account of much that has caused general disquietude in the polemical theology of our day. But there are some other points which ought not to be overlooked, when we are estimating the importance which is to be attached to the expressions

of favorable feeling which have lately been used by members of our communion with regard to the Church of Rome. It ought not to be forgotten, that a general change has taken place in the common tone of sentiment on this subject; and that modes of speaking about it have become familiar to us, which would not have been tolerated while the struggle of the Reformation was yet recent. The opinion by which Hooker offended so many of his contemporaries, that "God was merciful to save thousands of our fathers living in popish superstitions, inasmuch as they sinned ignorantly," would not now be thought by many a great stretch of liberality. It has not been without its effect, that so very many of our countrymen have been used to look at the externals of the Roman Catholic worship, with feelings like those with which an intelligent lover of the fine arts views the beautiful remains of Pagan antiquity. But there is another state of mind, widely different from this, and equally removed from antiquarian enthusiasm, and from religious indifference, but which nevertheless may manifest itself in a somewhat similar result. It has been described by a writer of the school which is charged with a tendency to Romanism, in the remark,—"We are in no danger of becoming Romanists, and may bear to be dispassionate, and (I may say) philosophical in our treatment of their errors."* On the same principle persons who have not only condemned, but

* *Tracts for the Times*, No. 79, p. 3.

have laboriously exposed the errors, corruptions, and reigning spirit of the Church of Rome, might not unnaturally think themselves the more at liberty to give utterance not only to their general feelings of charity towards her, but likewise to all those which might be excited by the fairer sides of her past history and her present condition, and more especially by the works of many of her great writers. This however will not, I am aware, serve at all to defend or account for the language which has been applied to the Reformers, the Reformation, and Protestantism, and which has given, in many cases, I think, very just offence. But I also think that a very unfair use has often been made of this language for the purposes of controversy. Persons who have spoken moderately themselves, have been made answerable, by a harsh construction, for the expressions used by their friends, and then conclusions have been drawn from these expressions, which they do not warrant. And it has happened that some of those which are in themselves most censurable, have nevertheless been most abused, and afford the least ground of alarm. I fully sympathise with the indignation which has been roused by the arbitrary misuse of the word Protestantism, by which its meaning has been limited to a mere negation of every thing that men on both sides profess to revere. But still it seems evident that those who so misuse the word can only be understood according to the sense which they themselves, however unwarrantably, attach to it: and that their meaning is perverted, if

what they say of Protestantism is applied to what others, in a very different sense, call the Protestant Religion. It cannot indeed be denied that expressions have been deliberately used which clearly imply a certain degree of dissatisfaction with the present state of the Church, a certain desire of change, a certain regret mingled with disapprobation at the course pursued by some of our Reformers, and especially at the extent to which they were swayed by foreign influence. But I have yet to learn that such views and feelings are inconsistent with the obligations of a Minister of our Church, or with a sincere attachment to her. I know of no authority that is entitled to prescribe to any of us the opinions which he must hold on the history of the Church, or the lessons which he must gather from it: and I have no wish to see such an authority established, whether it is to be administered by a few or by the many. Rather I would say, we cannot be too cautious of every approach toward such an odious and pernicious species of spiritual tyranny. If any one is convinced, that the Reformation has left nothing to desire, and that it has taken away nothing that we ought to regret, he may well be content with the pleasure of such a belief, without seeking to force it upon others as a duty. I would only observe that a contrary persuasion is at all events nothing peculiar to any party in the present controversy. An admirable person, in whose premature removal the Church and the nation have to deplore a loss which will not be soon

repaired, one of the most strenuous as well as able opponents of the school which is reproached with partiality to Romanism, had observed with his characteristic candour: "No wise man doubts that the Reformation was imperfect, or that in the Romish system there were many good institutions, and practices, and feelings, which it would be most desirable to restore among ourselves."* There may be a difference which I am not able to appreciate, between the desire to restore and the wish to reappropriate, but I think it can hardly be so great, that while the one term is inoffensive, the other should throw the Church and the country into a ferment. I am glad however to see that an explanation has been offered of some of the phrases which had given the greatest offence, not so much because I should myself have thought it necessary, as because it indicates a spirit of conciliation which seems to me the thing that is most needed on both sides.† I will add but one word before I drop the subject. It has been alleged as an objection against the movement which gave rise to this controversy, that its tendency is directly counter to the spirit of the age, and betrays that its authors have been misled by a blind antipathy, which prevents them from discerning between the good

* Arnold: *Sermons on Christian Life.* Introduction, p. lvi.

† *Explanation of a passage in an article on certain works of Bishop Jewell, published in the British Critic for July,* 1841, *in a letter to the Rev. Charles Smith Bird. By the Writer of the Article.* See particularly p. 65—71.

and the evil in the character of their own times. I do not know whether the fact warrants the inference: but doubtless so to set ourselves above the spirit of our age, would be no less foolish and blamable than the idolatrous admiration which bows to it as infallibly wise, and perfectly good. I would only observe that if such be the real nature of the movement, there can be little reason for alarm about its progress. It is as if one should dread a series of encroachments on the bed of the sea, because an attempt has been somewhere made to shut it out by a dike.

I am aware, my Reverend Brethren, that the language of moderation is commonly least welcome where it is most needed. For this very reason I confidently hope that what I have said will by you be kindly received and favorably interpreted. And I will now conclude this address, which has already exceeded its just limits, with a very few words of practical advice. Be on your guard against the illusions of names and phrases, and against the influence of authority, in this matter. You may perhaps suffer no loss, though you should have no means of forming an opinion on the merits of this controversy; but you would sustain a grievous loss, if you should borrow your opinion of it from others: you would have surrendered the independence of your judgement, and be in danger of becoming the instruments of a party against your real views and intentions. Remember that, though words are the necessary vehicle of truth, they mostly represent it but imper-

fectly, and that the form in which a proposition is conveyed, though very important, is much less so than the spirit in which it is interpreted and applied. Set the highest value on those truths which both parties profess, and on the authorities to which they both appeal: you will probably find that they afford an ample range for your professional studies, and sufficient directions both for faith and practice. Be still more circumspect as to that which you communicate to others, than as to what you adopt for yourselves. Let the wants, rather than the tastes, of your hearers supply the measure of your teaching. If you perceive that their prevailing tendency is to overrate the value of their privileges as churchmen, to place an undue reliance on the efficacy of outward ordinances, to build their hopes less on the Divine mercy than on their strict attention to the performance of their social and religious duties, then it will be incumbent on you to warn them against the danger of bigotry and superstition, of formalism and legality. If on the other hand their leaning appears to be rather in the opposite direction, if the predominant failing is indifference about all visible bonds of Christian union, an inordinate craving for religious excitement, an impatience and contempt of all forms of devotion which do not minister to this appetite, a disposition to regard its gratification as the substance of all spiritual blessings, and to make it a substitute for steady, uniform, active piety, charity, and self-denial; you would not be *rightly dividing the word of truth*,

unless you dwelt frequently and earnestly on that side of it which you find to be most generally overlooked. Should you even, by this faithful discharge of your duty, incur the reproach of preaching yourselves, or seeking to magnify your own office, you need not be ashamed of your work, so long as you have the witness of your conscience, that you only *study to shew yourselves approved unto God.* And you will never want a sufficient share of the approbation and confidence of men, if you only take heed that your conduct adorn and illustrate your doctrine, "that"—to borrow the language of a great Father of our Church—"as by your Sermons you preach in season, so, by your lives you may preach out of season, that is, at all seasons, and to all men, that they, seeing your good works, may glorify God, on your behalf and on their own."‡

‡ Jeremy Taylor. Sermon I. *On the Minister's Duty.* Works, vol. vi., p. 506.

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